

TABLE 2- INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY AWARENESS

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Face it folks, no matter what you call it . . . marketing, promotion, outreach, public education, advertising or community awareness . . . it's very expensive.

As consumers, we are constantly bombarded with the sights and sounds of marketers attempting to separate us from our hard-earned dollars. Public service announcements warn us, cajole us, inform us and preach to us incessantly. They make us laugh; they make us cry. They leap at us from all directions, all day — every day. For me, the result is often a perplexing swirl of messages, promises and big, big discount prices.

How can your alternative fuels message ever hope to compete? Be as creative as a Madison Avenue marketing firm and learn the negotiating skills of a UN peacekeeper. And, always have a good time doing it. Few coalitions can afford a major market television campaign, but every coalition can print a newsletter or place a loaned alternative fuel vehicle in the *right* spot at a community event.

Remember the importance of frequency when planning your program. A more frequent message to a smaller, targeted, audience may have a bigger impact. For most people, a message must be seen or heard multiple times before it is remembered. Being humorous or unusual when conveying the message can help strengthen its effectiveness.

Keep in mind what appeals to you. Chances are that what you like in a promotional spot (humor, creative design or a smiling child) will catch the attention of the rest of us. Be succinct when inserting the environmental, economic, energy security or vehicle/fuel education message. Ask colleagues and stakeholder experts for advice and reviewing prior to final design.

Some suggestions:

- Branding: Use names/logos — Clean Cities and your stakeholders'.
- Define target audience: Fleets? Driving public? Decision-makers?
- Know your message: Strengths and weaknesses.
- Appeal to children: They'll educate the adults.
- Find openings: Free articles/ads in your city, county, or company newsletter.
- Timing: Look ahead at the calendar. Watch seasonal fluctuations in media pricing. Plan to place a vehicle/poster/brochure at upcoming city council or school board meetings or at a stakeholder's company picnic.
- Use humor, babies or dogs: What catches your attention?
- Leverage: Get stakeholders using the message within their ads. Do they have a graphics or marketing department? Will they conduct the mailing on behalf of the coalition?

